

# Current Economic Programs Printed Survey Results: by the *Transportation Annual Survey Statistics Users* Respondent Base

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U.S. Census Bureau  
Current Economic Statistics User Survey

OMB CQM-26 (Rev.5/5/98)

## I. DATA CONTENT

Your answers identifying the survey data you use will help us understand our users' patterns of data use.

1. Which Current Economic Statistics from the Census Bureau do you use? (Mark all that apply.)

### (1) Monthly

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0.8%;	1	None
66.9%;	83	Retail Sales
52.4%;	65	Wholesale Trade
54.0%;	67	Manufacturing/Trade Inventory/Sales
58.1%;	72	Housing Starts
63.7%;	79	Building Permits
48.4%;	60	New Home Sales
50.8%;	63	Value of New Construction Put in Place
32.3%;	40	Housing Completions
29.0%;	36	Expenditures for Residential Improvements
37.1%;	46	New Residential Construction
17.7%;	22	New Mobile Home Placements
48.4%;	60	Monthly Imports and Exports
62.9%;	78	Current Industrial Reports
52.4%;	65	Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, Orders

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Replies 124; Forms 137

### (2) Quarterly

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51.9%;	40	Quarterly Financial Report
80.5%;	62	Current Industrial Reports
6.5%;	5	Federal Assistance Awards Data System
23.4%;	18	Quarterly Tax Survey
11.7%;	9	Quarterly Public Employee Retirement

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Replies 77; Forms 137

### (3) Annual

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73.7%;	101	Annual Retail Trade
69.3%;	95	Annual (Wholesale) Trade
54.0%;	74	Annual Survey of Communications
100.0%;	137	Transportation Annual Survey
60.6%;	83	Service Annual Survey
74.5%;	102	County Business Patterns

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43.1%;	59	ZIP Code Business Patterns
54.7%;	75	Statistics of U.S. Businesses
35.8%;	49	Characteristics of New Housing
51.8%;	71	Annual Building Permits
32.1%;	44	New Residential Construction in Selected Metropolitan Areas
42.3%;	58	Annual Capital Expenditures
85.4%;	117	Annual Survey of Manufactures
64.2%;	88	Current Industrial Reports
30.7%;	42	Research and Development Survey
38.0%;	52	Plant Capacity Utilization
18.2%;	25	Education Finance Survey
26.3%;	36	State Tax Collection Survey
10.2%;	14	Annual Public Employee Retirement
23.4%;	32	Annual Survey of Public Employment
23.4%;	32	Consolidated Federal Funds Report
37.2%;	51	State Government Finances
56.9%;	78	Annual Imports and Exports

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Replies 137; Forms 137

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## II. DATA DELIVERY

The Census Bureau is considering use of the Internet as the primary method of data delivery. By completing the following questions, you will help us retain the most essential delivery formats and design the best possible data delivery service.

(4) 2. How do you receive current economic data now? (Mark all that apply.)

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88.1%;	119	Printed Publications	14.8%;	20	Direct (E-mail) delivery
80.7%;	109	World Wide Web (Internet)	14.8%;	20	FAX
50.4%;	68	CD-ROMs	2.2%;	3	Regular mail
24.4%;	33	Diskettes	4.4%;	6	Other

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Replies 135; Forms 137

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- visit to Census release library and requests to commerce library.
  - Library
  - Check values by telephone
  - also use microfiche in some cases.
  - Write or call the specific office having the information I need.
  - Via Analytics
  - CD Rom & Publications in Library

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(5) 3. What format do you PREFER when downloading data for further manipulation? (Mark all that apply.)

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69.2%;	90	Spreadsheet (e.g., wkl, xls, etc...)
40.0%;	52	Database (e.g., dbf, mdb, etc...)
33.1%;	43	ASCII delimited
18.5%;	24	ASCII flat files
14.6%;	19	Retrieve from print or screen and enter manually
8.5%;	11	Do not manipulate data
3.1%;	4	Other

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Replies 130; Forms 137

- CD-Rom
- Reports written to put data into context
- PDF formats were the best
- pdf

4. What capabilities do you want on the Census Internet site? (For each line, indicate the degree of your preferences, from 5 [high] to 1 [low].)

(6) a. Direct (E-mail) delivery:

36.1%;	43	5	18.5%;	22	3	9.2%;	11	1
21.0%;	25	4	7.6%;	9	2	7.6%;	9	Don't know

Replies 119; Forms 137

(7) b. E-mail notification:

42.0%;	50	5	21.0%;	25	3	5.9%;	7	1
13.4%;	16	4	11.8%;	14	2	5.9%;	7	Don't know

Replies 119; Forms 137

(8) c. Retrieve/display to screen:

61.8%;	76	5	15.4%;	19	3	5.7%;	7	1
8.1%;	10	4	2.4%;	3	2	6.5%;	8	Don't know

Replies 123; Forms 137

(9) d. Search:

73.0%;	92	5	10.3%;	13	3	0.0%;	0	1
14.3%;	18	4	0.0%;	0	2	2.4%;	3	Don't know

Replies 126; Forms 137

(10) e. Download complete data sets:

71.0%;	88	5	8.9%;	11	3	0.8%;	1	1
12.9%;	16	4	3.2%;	4	2	3.2%;	4	Don't know

Replies 124; Forms 137

(11) f. Download selected data:

78.0%;	99	5	5.5%;	7	3	0.8%;	1	1
11.8%;	15	4	1.6%;	2	2	2.4%;	3	Don't know

Replies 127; Forms 137

(12) g. Software help/tutorials:

23.7%;	27	5	30.7%;	35	3	7.9%;	9	1
17.5%;	20	4	14.9%;	17	2	5.3%;	6	Don't know

Replies 114; Forms 137

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(13) h. Publication-quality printing:

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35.6%;	42	5	19.5%;	23	3	9.3%;	11	1
22.0%;	26	4	12.7%;	15	2	0.8%;	1	Don't know

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Replies 118; Forms 137

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(14) i. Charts and graphs:

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29.8%;	36	5	21.5%;	26	3	14.9%;	18	1
18.2%;	22	4	14.0%;	17	2	1.7%;	2	Don't know

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Replies 121; Forms 137

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(15) j. Geographic maps:

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31.9%;	38	5	16.8%;	20	3	18.5%;	22	1
17.6%;	21	4	12.6%;	15	2	2.5%;	3	Don't know

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Replies 119; Forms 137

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(16) k. Other, please specify:

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88.9%;	8	electronic bulletin board	11.1%;	1	Other
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Replies 9; Forms 137

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- ACROBAT FILES, which you may include in item h.
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(17) l. Electronic Bulletin Board (To collect write-ins)

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0.0%;	0	5	0.0%;	0	3	0.0%;	0	1
0.0%;	0	4	100.0%;	1	2	0.0%;	0	Don't know

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Replies 1; Forms 137

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### III. DATA USAGE

Your answers describing how you use the data will help us design the most effective Current Economic Statistics retrieval tool.

(18) 5. Do you combine/compare/merge data from more than one source listed in Question 1?

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27.1%;	36	No	72.9%;	97	Yes
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Replies 133; Forms 137

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(19) 6. What time periods do you consider when using these data? (Mark X all that apply.)

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64.9%;	87	trends up to 5 years	40.3%;	54	trends up to 1 year
61.9%;	83	5+ years	0.0%;	0	Other
44.0%;	59	latest 1 or 2 periods			

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Replies 134; Forms 137

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(20) 7. How do you use the data? (Mark all that apply.)

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55.6%;	75	Create value-added products/services
49.6%;	67	Perform patron/client inquiries
25.9%;	35	Republish in newspaper/journal
20.7%;	28	Inform marketing decisions
20.0%;	27	Store reports/printouts for archival purposes
14.8%;	20	Inform investment decisions
9.6%;	13	Locate new sites
0.0%;	0	Other

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Replies 135; Forms 137

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- [none]
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(21) 8. What explanatory information do you consult when using these data? (Mark all that apply.)

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85.6%;	113	Definition of terms
61.4%;	81	Narrative text describing survey results
60.6%;	80	Sampling and estimation methodology
47.0%;	62	Survey design
4.5%;	6	None
3.0%;	4	Other

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Replies 132; Forms 137

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- frequency and availability
  - Comparisons to earlier surveys and/or similar data from other agencies--e.g. census to BEA in one estimates.
  - Census Bureau Staff
  - Phone calls to Census and or DOL
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(22) 9. Do you have any pressing data or information needs that are not currently being met?

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- You should have a central source for sales for all SIC codes. The data could be more timely.
- Yes--Need more timely and more defined (i.e. 4-digit SIC code) SUB-NATIONAL data.
- Monthly Retail Sales is no longer in print-- it is time consuming to get it off the internet because of the download time. It's a waste of valuable research time.
- None.
- Foreign trade - exports & imports - by 4-digit (data that had been available in "Trades Employment") - without SIC (& soon NAIC), cannot compare trade with domestic activity.
- Selected salaries for selected industries & occupations.
- MCD Business Patterns, Massachusetts is doing away with county government, MCD income estimates.
- Non-residential building permits--number by type of building.
- The availability of Residential and Commercial Building Permit Data.
- We use and would like to continue to use retail sales by county data and the merchandise line sales data.
- I'd love to see employment data by SIC based on place of residence. Also wish for reconciliation between RIMS, SIC, & NAICS.
- Number of Mobile Homes & Value of, by state, on a monthly basis. (Currently only published annually) -- Also, by county, if possible.
- 1) Monthly building permits by state. 2) Retail sales by states & MSA's.
- Non-residential building permits data and value of new non-residential construction part in place.
- Monthly trade data based on export location.
- Yes: Durable goods forecast for up to 12 months. I can't find this info anywhere.
- We are always looking for very current information. We normally use Census data for historical

- trends and background.
- Location (Census Block/Block Group) of employment for employees', commutes for work between counties.
- Yes--Commercial building permits--Bring them back now!!!
- Current employment by #'s of employees, by SIC, by MCD, by specific employer ID only.
- YES! Bring back non-residential state/local permits authorized! This was a severe loss for interpreting local economic trends. Also, more geographic detail, more frequently.
- Commodity flows data with 3 digit SIC value of shipments between states-The state to state flows.
- Seasonal Population - estimates. More information on affordable housing-market.
- Monthly Retail Sales for U.S. Metropolitan Areas.
- Organic Chemicals Annual was very useful before it was discontinued. We would like annual production, consumption figures made available again.
- More frequent substate mtg. stats (annual survey is state wide only)
- Household Expenditure Data at State Level.
- Regional retail sales (metropolitan area) monthly non-residential building permits by metropolitan area monthly.
- Pollution abatement expenditures by SIC
- We want SIC data at the product level by region. Please make every effort to provide locational tags to Canadian & Mexican data. Full country data profiles are not sufficient.
- Would like Government Finance series in print form.
- Non-residential Building permits.
- Place and regional economic data sets in relation to population/race trends.
- Geographic data by product class, especially in county business patterns. Totals at the 4-digit industry level aren't detailed enough.
- I would love something like census lookup for building permits and imports & exports.
- Service Data on an manual/quarterly/monthly basis by 2,3, & 4-digit SIC!
- Advanced Retail numbers should have "jewelry stores".
- Crime--not all areas of the U.S. participate in their state uniform crime reports program, so it becomes difficult to make informed decisions.
- Permits for non-residential by place.
- Imports and exports by 4-digit SIC. Very important--in print. Publication form--quarterly.
- Current local (county) data on any of the following: retail sales.
- In general, estimates and figures at higher geographic levels, such as block groups or zip + 4's.
- Geographic Area Retail Sales
- MSA retail sales
- Commercial, Industrial, and other non-residential construction put-in-place!
- Non-residential construction data outside California! Bring it back!
- Information on type of procurement contracts by NASA and DOD to the space industry.
- We have a need for long historical time series and for long-term forecasts.
- Information about how well the ACES programs capture new business formation and business deaths.
- Commercial Building Permits County level on a timely basis.
- Future of employment w/regards to manufacturing & agriculture. (i.e. what percentage of economy will these represent.) Also, resource availability trends.

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#### IV. INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

We will soon begin restructuring the Current Economic Surveys based on the new North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Your answers will help us ensure that these surveys continue to provide the economic information needed by markets, policy makers, and business people. For more information on NAICS, see the Bureau's web site: <http://www.census.gov/NAICS>.

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(24) 10. At what levels of detail do you MOST FREQUENTLY USE industry data classified by Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)? (Mark all that apply.)

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73.5%;	97	4-digit industries (or maximum detail I can get)
48.5%;	64	2-digit major groups
44.7%;	59	Sector totals (SIC division); e.g., Manufacturing or Retail Trade
43.2%;	57	3-digit industry groups
3.8%;	5	NA (don't use SIC-based data)
3.8%;	5	Other

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Replies 132; Forms 137

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- digit SIC product codes
  - Greater detail when available
  - sub-groups within 4-digit
  - Name of Industry & # of employees
  - Would like to have 6 or 7 digit SIC
- 

(25) 11. Were you aware that the SIC system is being replaced by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)?

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18.7%;	25	I was unaware of this
29.1%;	39	I am partially aware, but lack details
52.2%;	70	I am aware and understand some implications

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Replies 134; Forms 137

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12. Would you like to receive more information about NAICS?

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(26) Yes, please send me - (Mark all that apply)

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85.2%;	75	A brochure that explains NAICS	34.1%;	30	Conference announcements
70.5%;	62	NAICS implementation plans	3.4%;	3	Other

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Replies 88; Forms 137

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- Send info on NAICS comparability with existing SIC data.
  - A manual and numerical list
  - I am awaiting CD-ROM!
- 

(27) No Thanks -

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68.0%;	34	I will check the Census Bureau's web site ( <a href="http://www.census.gov/naics">www.census.gov/naics</a> )
32.0%;	16	I don't need more information about NAICS

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Replies 50; Forms 137

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## V. USER PROFILE

Please tell us about yourself so we may serve you better.

(28) 13. Type of organization.

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34.1%;	46	Business	3.0%;	4	Individual
29.6%;	40	Government	3.0%;	4	Media
22.2%;	30	Academic/Research	0.7%;	1	Library
5.2%;	7	Association	2.2%;	3	Other

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Replies 135; Forms 137

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- Library (University
  - Corp. Library
  - Council of Governments
- 

(29) 14. Do you work in your organization's library?

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37.6%; 50 Yes 62.4%; 83 No

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Replies 133; Forms 137

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(30) 15. What is your affiliation with the Census Bureau?

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64.1%; 84 None 3.1%; 4 Business/Industry Data Center  
15.3%; 20 State Data Center 12.2%; 16 Other  
5.3%; 7 Census Information Center

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Replies 131; Forms 137

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- State Government Agency.
  - Richmond Public Library, BST Dept. 101 E. Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23219
  - Associate Stat Data Center
  - Former Advisory Committee member and CES researcher.
  - Employed by US DOC/BXA
  - State Data Center Affiliation
  - Cooperator in disseminating permits authorized data
  - Census Liaison
  - Customer
  - Depository
  - Affiliate Data Center
  - Fund the CIR-MA35N
  - GPO Depository
  - BEA, U.S. Department of Commerce
  - Associate Data Center
  - Local affiliate of State Data Center
- 

(35) 20. May we contact you to follow up on this questionnaire?

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78.5%; 102 Yes 21.5%; 28 No

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Replies 130; Forms 137

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(36) Question 21. Remarks:

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- You should include questions on technology usage in your census questions (in the 10 year census).
- The computerized data is fine when know exactly which dat you want. It is not so good when you want to know what is available and related information; in this case the printed publication e.g. censu of Manufactures, is far superior.
- The library relies heavily on Census data bu twe have a need for the information in both printed and downloadable (manipulable) formats. The library would purchase both the printed format as well as subscribe to the census website.
- 1). It is important to be able to retrieve data in easy to use formats (spreadsheet or ascii)- "pdf" formats are convenient to print, but difficult to use. 2). Please see question 9. 3). We are concerned about the discontinuity in time series data that will occur with NAICs. The 1987 SIC



- change was a significant problem-NAICS will likely be much worse. Any help from Census (bridges, publication of data in both classifications) would be a great help to data users.
- A published paper version should always be made available for purchase to the public. Information being available on the internet is nice, yet it is a completely different animal than having a hard copy version of the information. An example: I can receive my news off the internet, but I still prefer to get my newspaper in the morning for reading at my leisure away from a computer.
- Joe Cantalupo is no longer in service to the County of Rockland.
- When is 1997 Census to be available? Please keep as much of the data in print as possible-- Thanks!
- Census bureau data is always helpful--the data you provide enhances our publication and enables readers to make informal business decisions.
- --But please ask for Deborah Foster.

Thank you.

- Thanks for asking!
- The efforts to provide electronic format data are a vast improvement over paper/hard copy publications. They have increased the accuracy and utility of the data sets.
- Your credibility is a great strength.
- This survey was filled out by three people.
- I prefer e-mail contacts rather than phone, as I am frequently not available at my phone for extended periods.
- You've done a fine job in organizing your internet site. As a librarian, a primary concern is the archiving of information. Will historical files/data/reports be kept on the net indefinitely? As you plan for net-based information, keep in mind the historical aspects as well as the current need for up-to-date economic information.
- We used to receive from state employment agency using worker comp data lists by geography MCD; by SIC; by name of employer--the number of employees. We were well aware this was sensitive data for competitive reasons of employer confidentiality. Unfortunately, someone at another agency apparently released some of this data to the "public" and now it is unavailable--what is left is very inadequate, unsorted data--difficult to interpret. We can not do adequate community profiles by consolidated data any more. How can similar data be obtained?
- Being able to download from the web site has generally worked very well for us. The only troublesome aspect is that the page numbers of the PDF documents differ from the page numbers in their table of contents (e.g. - printing page 18 gets you page 12 of the document).

A big "thank you" to the Census specialists who have been most helpful and polite when we've called with questions.

- We serve a varied clientele (academic, business, government, and private citizens) and work across many subject. Census data are absolutely vital to us. Our biggest need is for more geographic area detail more frequently (state, county, place, if possible). Users often do not understand the 5 yr. gaps and lag time for the major Economic Surveys that offer such detail, much less the 10 yr. decennial cycle. The internet is a great help in speeding "publication", but we find access is not yet universal. We still download and print entire documents for guide reference and historical purposes. I am concerned about just how long the electronic media will remain accurate and usable as technology changes. How will the Bureau deal with these problems?
- Please contact ASAP: Bob Davidson, Gov't Information Service Section Palm Beach county Library System Service

3650 SUMMIT BLVD. 33406  
(561) 233-2600, ext. 164  
email Robert ID@PB.SEFLIN.ORG

- Data validity in the NAICS project is one of our concerns. Has any provision been for cross checks of the data?
- I received the survey on August 7th--so was not able to return it in the time requested!

Our office is very interested in any information on the implementation of NAICS--as our researchers will be using it a great deal.

- As a consultant I frequently have need of information on trade or other aspects of business.

Once I locate the source of information, the government people have been very helpful in getting it to me.

Some sort of index on reports or databases may be helpful to people like myself. We could view it at a web site. If we could download the info by segments it would reduce your workload.

Keep up the good work! You are appreciated.

- We look forward to working with you on the upcoming Census.
- Tables which have no column headings and which one must consult separate documents are highly confusing.
- So far, the lookup approach has been not valuable to me. It has some limitations. CD's are my second favorite.
- I appreciate receiving this survey.
- We are in the site selection/economic development function. Census data is absolutely crucial to our function, especially the ability to compare areas.
- Newest format of Import/Export CD-ROM requires extra steps to access/print. Preview version has more efficient to use.
- We love the Census Bureau! Clear publications indices and ease of search engines on the Internet site are very important to us. Also, choice of how to download data is good, not all users need or can use spreadsheet software.
- Will all Census data be available only via the Internet? My customers prefer printed format. Thank you.
- More documentation and instructions for obtaining data from gohper directories would be helpful.
- The Website can be quite cumbersome to search sometimes.
- I use your "Telephone contacts for Data Users" and phone for help and information--of ten. I am very pleased with the response and helpfulness of all the people at Census, from receptionists to analysts. It would be nice to get it regularly. I forget, from year to year, to send for updates, until I notice that some contact names are out of date.
- I like the fact that the Census Bureau Produces many of its documents in the .pdf format, these are easy to print, bind and archive in our library. However, what is even more important to our firm is the ability to manipulate the data, and easily bring it into a data base or spreadsheet. If I had to choose I would prefer the raw data to the printable format.

I might use more of the data listed in question now that I know it exists.

Figure 1: